

**24-Hour Helpline: (734) 722-6800**

**Facebook.com/firststepmi**

**www.firststep-mi.org**



**FirstStep**  
Peaceful Families • Safe Communities

PEACEFUL FAMILIES  SAFE COMMUNITIES

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# Navigating Intimate Partner Violence in Civil Cases: A Guide for Pro Bono Attorneys (Part 1)

**Audriana Buchanan-Cronk (She/Her)**

Director of Operations + Community Engagement

[abuchanan@firststep-mi.org](mailto:abuchanan@firststep-mi.org)

# What to Expect





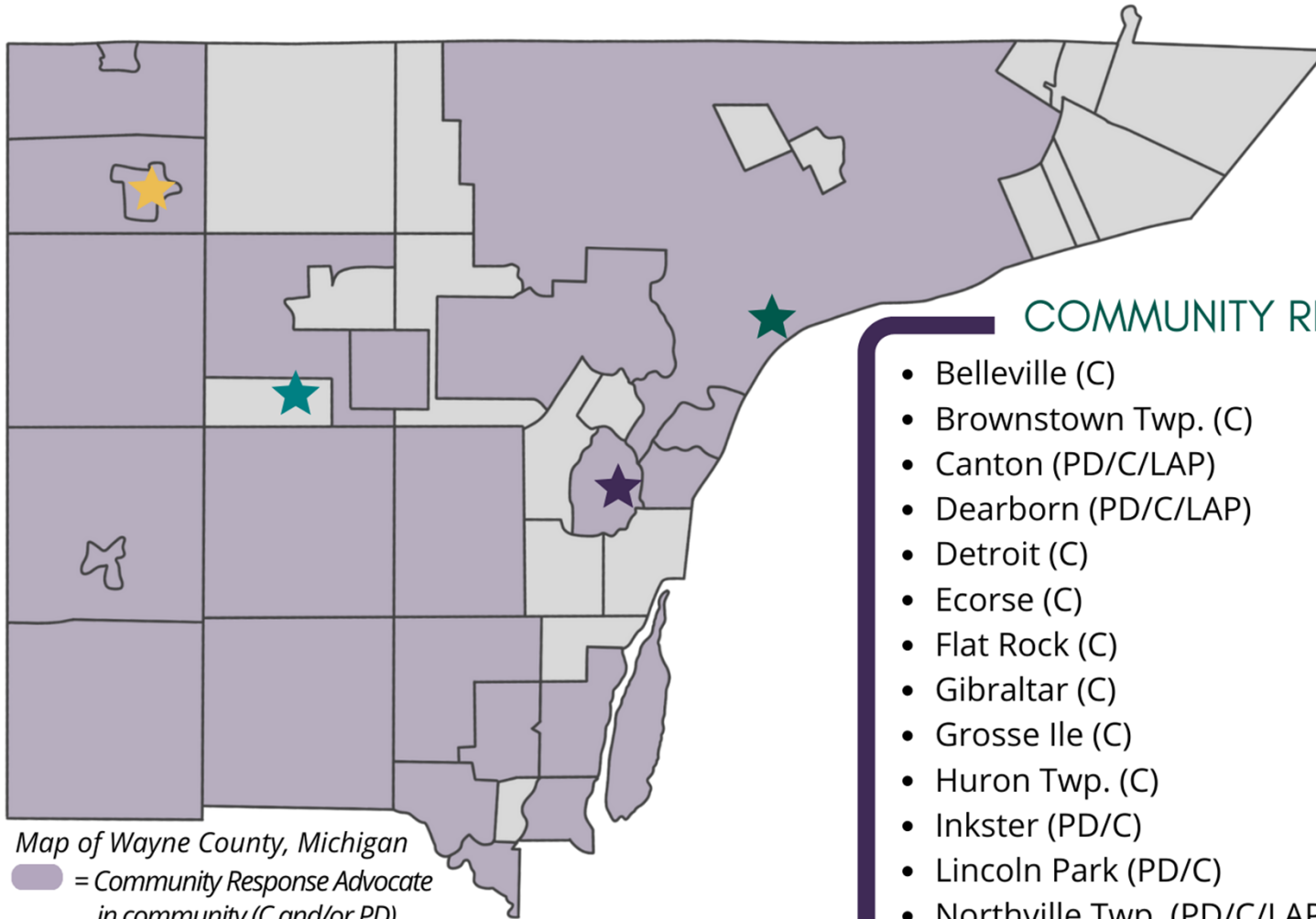
## First Step offers FREE, confidential, and comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault

- 24-hour helpline
- 24-hour on-call crisis response
- Emergency shelter for individuals, families, and their pets
- Transitional supportive housing (TSH)
- Counseling, advocacy, and support groups for adults and children
- Support and education for family and friends
- Safety planning
- Transportation, food, clothing, household goods
- Criminal court advocacy
- Personal Protection Orders (PPO) assistance
- Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)
- Community education and outreach programs
- In-service trainings on domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Legal, financial, medical, and housing information and referrals

# Community Response Program

- Advocating for survivors' needs with community partners
- Working in collaboration with police officers, prosecutors, and other systems.
- Support survivors with:
  - Safety planning
  - Understanding their legal rights
  - Navigating the criminal justice system
  - Obtaining Personal Protection Orders, filing police reports, etc.

Currently, Community Response Advocates are represented in over 75% of cities in Wayne County!



## COMMUNITY RESPONSE SITES

- Belleville (C)
- Brownstown Twp. (C)
- Canton (PD/C/LAP)
- Dearborn (PD/C/LAP)
- Detroit (C)
- Ecorse (C)
- Flat Rock (C)
- Gibraltar (C)
- Grosse Ile (C)
- Huron Twp. (C)
- Inkster (PD/C)
- Lincoln Park (PD/C)
- Northville Twp. (PD/C/LAP)
- Northville (PD/C/LAP)
- Plymouth (PD/C/LAP)
- Plymouth Twp. (PD/C)
- River Rouge (C)
- Rockwood (C)
- Romulus (PD/C)
- Sumpter (C)
- Taylor (PD/C/LAP)
- Trenton (C)
- Van Buren (C)
- Westland (PD/C)
- Woodhaven (PD/C)

PD=Police Department C=Court LAP=Lethality Assessment Program

## FIRST STEP OFFICES

[www.firststep-mi.org](http://www.firststep-mi.org)

★ **PLYMOUTH**  
 Administrative &  
 Survivor Services  
 44567 Pinetree Dr.  
 Plymouth, MI 48170  
 734.416.1111

★ **WAYNE**  
 Survivor Services  
 Karen Wilson Smithbauer Center  
 4400 Venoy Rd.  
 Wayne, MI 48184  
 734.722.1772

★ **LINCOLN PARK**  
 Survivor Services  
 Community Policing Bldg  
 1394 Cleophus Pkwy  
 Lincoln Park, MI 48146  
 By appointment only

★ **DETROIT**  
 Survivor Services  
 The Block at Cass Park  
 2727 Second Ave. Ste 304  
 Detroit, MI 48210  
 By appointment only

# What First Step...

**Does NOT do...**

Gives advice

Tells people what to do

Mandates programs

Only serves women and children

Only accepts Wayne County Residents

**Does Do...**

Educate and empower

Support in identifying options and problem solving

Voluntary, comprehensive, and self-driven programs

Serves all identities

Located in Wayne County; only eligibility is IPV or SA victimization



**24-Hour Helpline**  
**734-722-6800**



**Crisis Intervention**



**Emotional Support**



**Referrals**



**Resources**



**Shelter Space**

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# If Not First Step, Who?



**Wayne:** 734-722-6800



**Washtenaw:** 734-995-5444



**Turning Point, Inc.**  
SERVICES TO END DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Macomb:** 586-463-6990



**HAVEN**

**Oakland:** 248-334-1274



**LACADA**  
Advocacy • Empowerment • Awareness

**Lapeer:** 810-667-4175



**National Domestic Violence Helpline:**  
800-799-7233



Leading the National Effort to End Sexual Violence

**National Sexual Assault Helpline:**  
800-656-4673

# Intimate Partner Violence\* (IPV) Defined

is a **pattern of behaviors** used by one partner to maintain **power and control** over another partner in an **intimate** relationship.

\*Also referred to as domestic violence, dating or relationship abuse, partner abuse

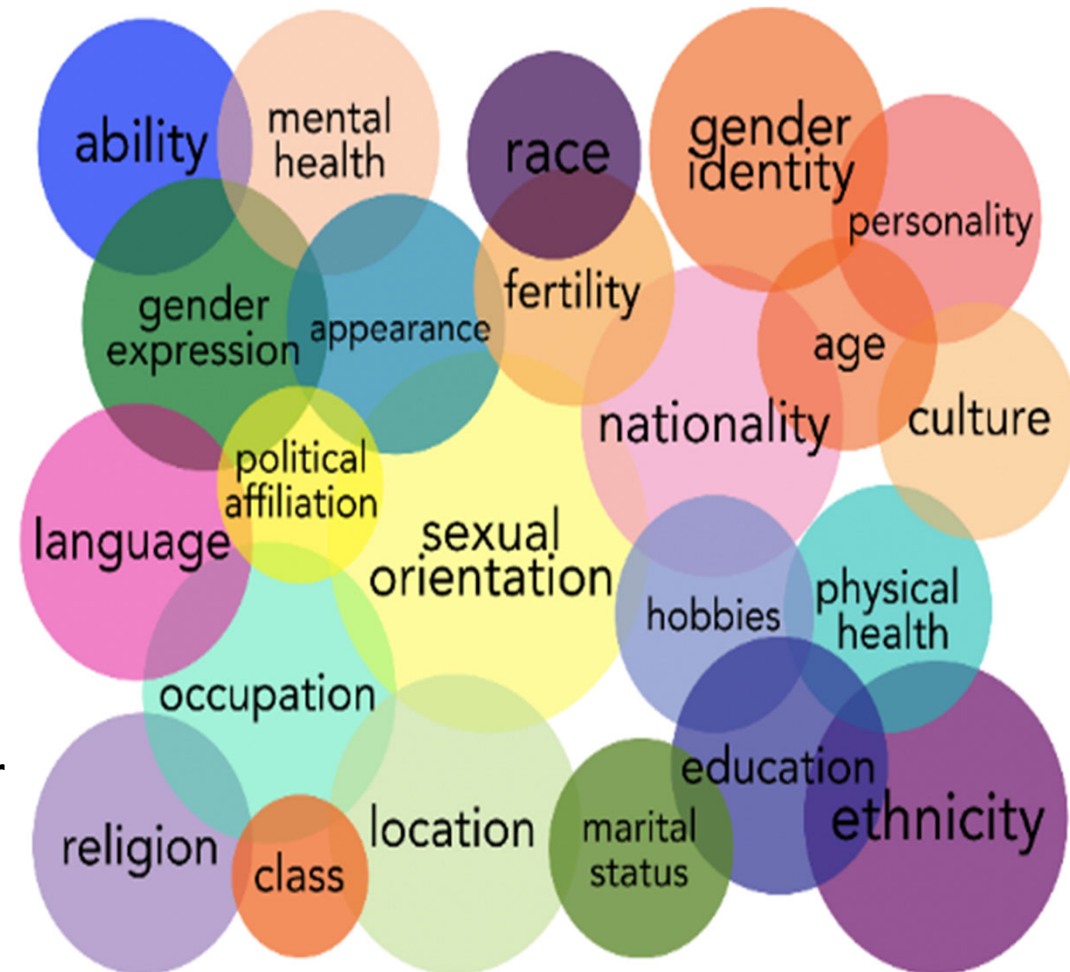
<https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/understand-relationship-abuse/>

# Who is Impacted?

**Domestic & sexual violence is no respecter of...**

- Person
- Identity
- Intersection

*We must acknowledge the needs and every experience that lead survivors to our care.*



# Prevent Intimate Partner Violence

When we teach skills and create the context for healthy relationships now, we create safer, healthier communities for everyone in the future.



**1 in 4 women**  
and **1 in 10 men**

have experienced contact sexual violence\*, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Among victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner,

**26% of women**  
and **15% of men**

experienced intimate partner violence for the first time before age 18.



# Michigan + Wayne County Stats

In 2021, **70,564** domestic violence-related crimes were reported\* in the State of Michigan

- **24,231** of those were *Wayne County*
- In 2020, **5,994** sexual assaults were reported in the State of Michigan



[michigan.gov/msp/-/media/Project/Websites/msp/micr-assets/2021/DV-County-and-Injury\\_2021.xlsx](https://michigan.gov/msp/-/media/Project/Websites/msp/micr-assets/2021/DV-County-and-Injury_2021.xlsx)

# Common Power & Control Tactics

*See '13 Forms of DV' wheel for more examples...*

Physical

Sexual

Children

Pets &  
Property

Social

Financial

Verbal

Intellectual

Emotional

Psychological

Spiritual

Cultural

# What Causes Domestic Violence?

Anger  
Problems?

Alcohol &  
Drugs?

Stress?

Pushing  
Buttons?

Mental  
Illness?

# Identifiers of Perpetrators of Abuse:

Central, Superior, and Entitled

Lack of Empathy/Remorse

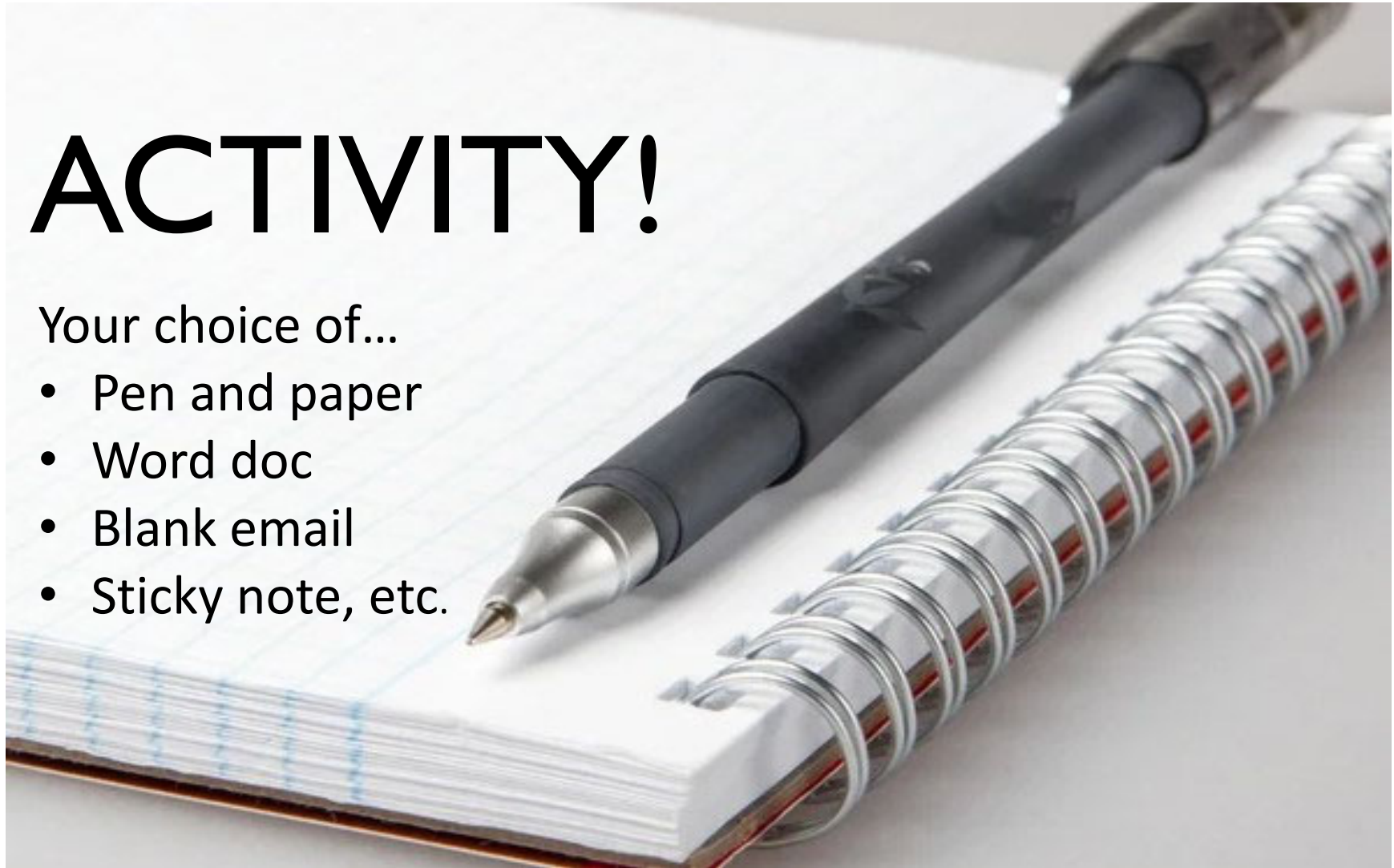
Mantra: “What’s Wrong with YOU?”



# ACTIVITY!

Your choice of...

- Pen and paper
- Word doc
- Blank email
- Sticky note, etc.

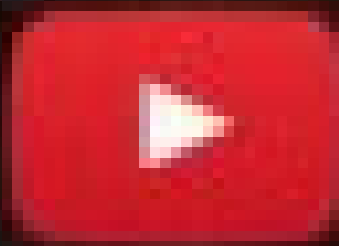


# Why Do Survivors Stay?

Fear, love, hope...

- Financially unable
- Outside pressures (*i.e.* “divorce is wrong,” “child needs parent”)
- Children
- Lack of support system and/or resources
- Unsafe to do so
- Manipulation (*i.e.*, *belief they don’t deserve better*)
- Trauma bond (neurobiology):
  - “Fear deepens bonding. Traumatic violence in relationships [especially if positive episodes intermittently present] greatly increases the intensity of the attachment bond.”

*The Betrayal Bond, Patrick Carnes*



**PRIVATE  
VIOLENCE**  
Private Violence is illegal

Twenty golden  
PRINCIPLES

**PEACEFUL FAMILIES**  **SAFE COMMUNITIES**

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# Keep In Mind

## LEAVING CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR A SURVIVOR

Survivors are **70x** **more likely** to be killed by their abuser when leaving.

The first 1 to 3 months after leaving is **the** **most** dangerous.

On average, it takes survivors **7-10** **attempts** at leaving before doing so safely.

# **USES OF POWER & CONTROL IN THE CIVIL LEGAL SYSTEM**

# Barriers in Civil Legal System

1. Court used as a weapon of abuse
2. Fear of retaliation; coercion and threats
3. Lack of understanding of legal rights
4. Limited access to legal representation
5. Financial dependence on abuser
6. Emotional trauma
7. Inadequate legal protections and/or enforcement
8. Lengthy legal processes
9. Inconsistent legal standards
10. Language and cultural barriers
11. Lack of resources and support
12. Laws not seeing IPV as issues between abusive parent and child(ren)
13. Victim blaming and stigmatization
14. Trauma Bonding
15. Difficulty in (safely) serving or enforcing legal documents
16. Safely following court orders; documenting ongoing abuse

# Examples of Tactics Perpetrators Use

## Before Court:

- Attempt to persuade survivor to drop case
- Utilize intimidation, threats, and coercion
- Increase stalking and surveillance; engage in defamation or cyberbullying
- Employ financial abuse to complicate matters or limit survivor's access

## During Court:

- Engage in overtly intimidating behaviors in court
- Feign distress or victimhood for sympathy from court and/or survivor
- Disrupt court proceedings through interruptions or disturbances

## After Court:

- Intentionally provoke the survivor to break court orders
- Manipulate child custody arrangements
- Continue perpetuating power and control through retaliation, stalking, isolation, harassment, and cyberbullying

# Power & Control



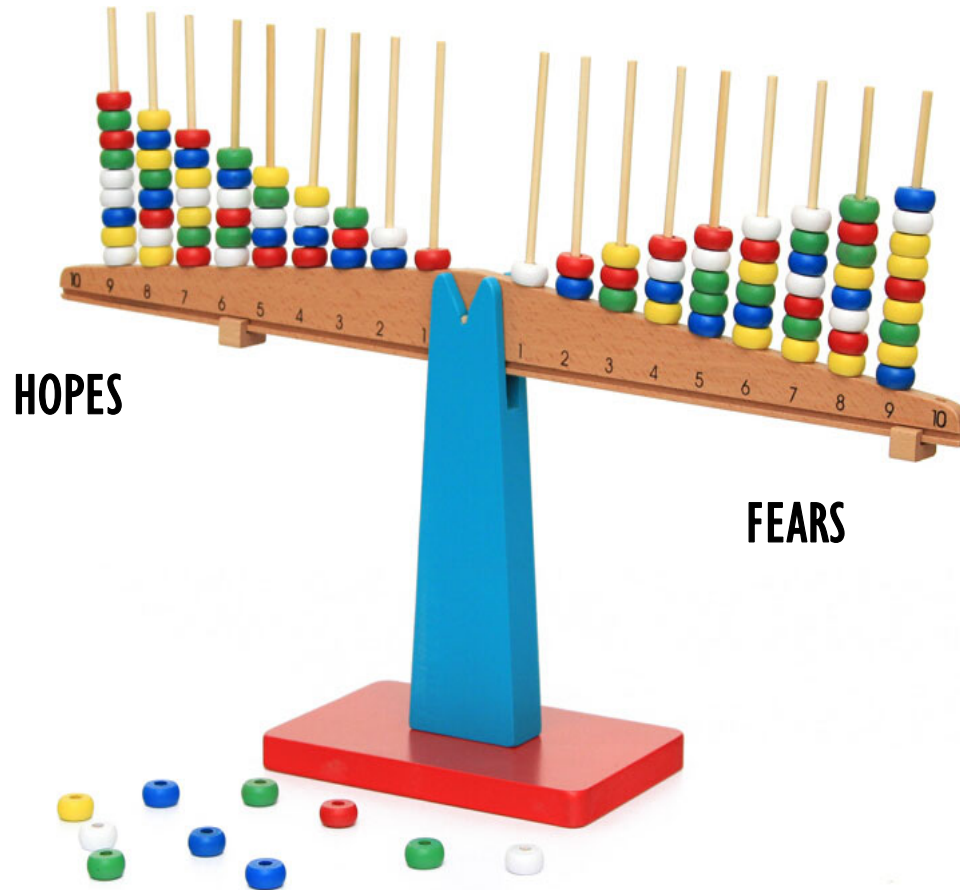


# Survivor Participation



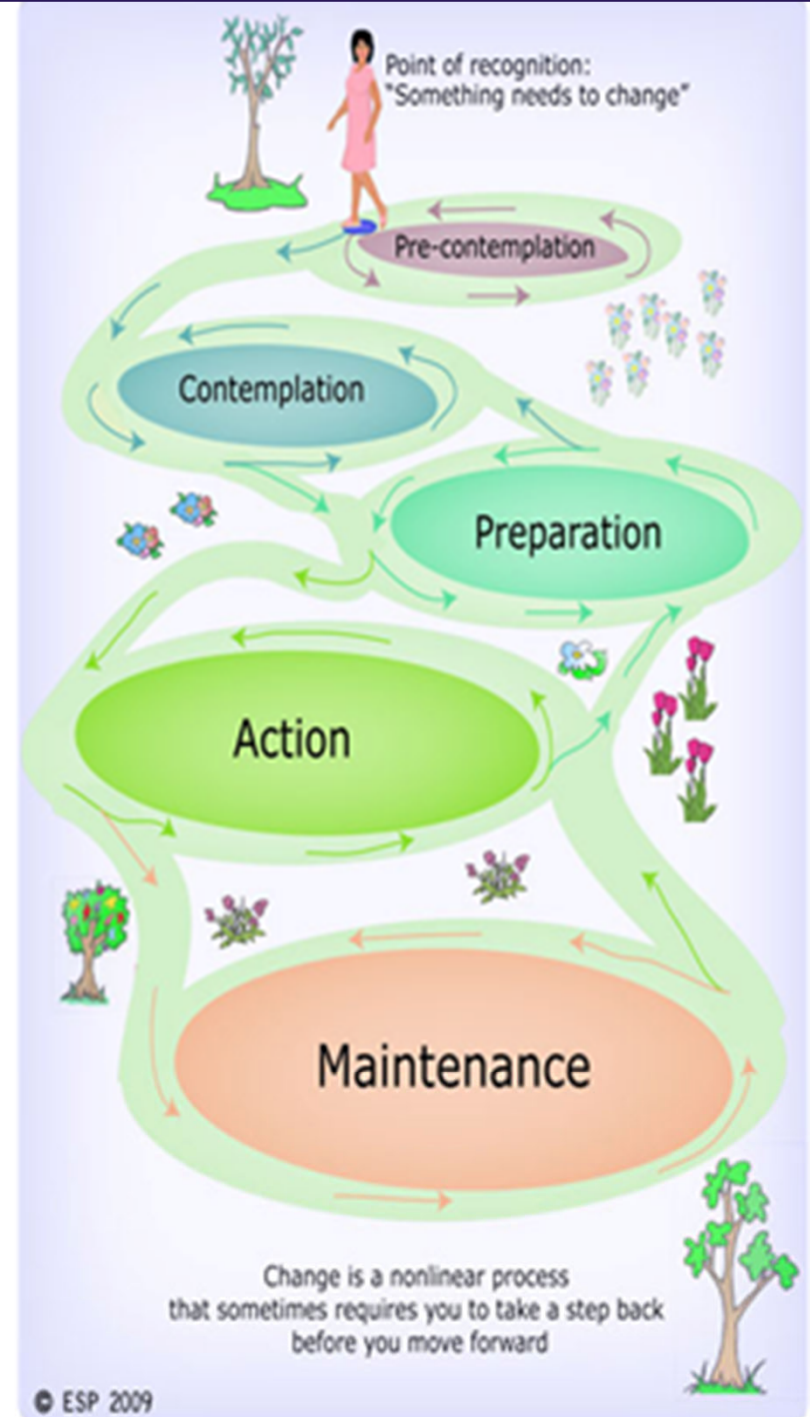
- Leaving is the most dangerous time for survivors
- Goals of separation look different to everyone
- The civil court process can be incredibly difficult on a survivor and their family

# Understanding a Survivor's Perspective



# STAGES OF CHANGE

- PRE-CONTEMPLATIVE
- CONTEMPLATIVE
- PREPARATION
- ACTION
- MAINTENANCE



# How can you support survivors in reaching their intended goals?

Connect- Build trust and link the client to relevant resources.

Acknowledge/Advocate- Express support, discuss options, and educate the client

Recognize- Validate the client's experiences and emotions, acknowledging the situation's impact.

Empathize- Actively listen and show empathy, referencing past discussions and ensuring the survivor's best interests.

Safety plan- Continuously assess their safety, tailor plans with expert input, and address concerns before, during, and after court proceedings.

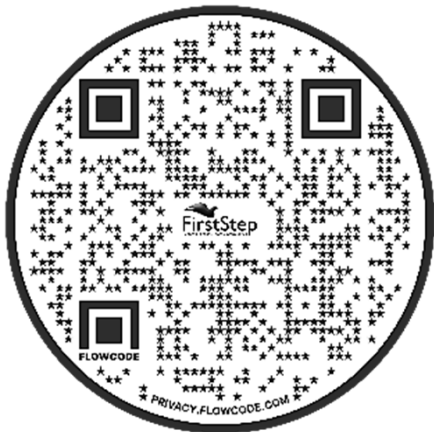
# Your Turn!

Questions?  
Comments?  
Thoughts?  
Reflections?





# THANK YOU!



**Website &  
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[734-722-6800](tel:734-722-6800)



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FirstStepPlymouth](https://youtube.com/FirstStepPlymouth)